

SENATOR WESELY: ...for teachers. We went from 58 percent level of salary up to 85 percent in terms of the benefit level that they would have if they retired at 65 instead of at 60. That is almost a 30 percent increase. At 61, it was a little over a 20 percent increase. At 62, it was a 20 percent increase. Now we want to go the extra step, as Senator Johnson talked about. We are already giving them the subsidization. They want more. They want absolutely no reduction whatsoever, and I recognize, 35 years is a long time, and I want to recognize their help, but I look at 25 years of service and \$155, I look at other retirement plans, and I look at the fact they have no early retirement, and I have to argue that in terms of policy for this state, it is a mistake to advance this bill. So I would urge your support for the kill motion, recognizing that would be very difficult, in fact, to achieve but, nevertheless, the argument has to be made that this policy question should be challenged.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. The member from North Platte, Senator Bernard-Stevens, followed by Senator Haberman and Hartnett.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, when I was tapped by our distinguished Governor to be the representative of the 42nd District I was quoted as saying that I never thought it possible to leave the teaching profession and take a full-time job that actually paid less, and that is indeed what happened when I became part of the Legislature. There are a lot of points that have been made today that I would like to kind of refute a little bit and I obviously rise not in support of the kill motion and in favor of LB 160. First of all, Senator Johnson, I understand from his position on Chairman of the Revenue Committee, has a lot of points that he needs to make because of that position and he has the overall tax situation in mind when he offers motions like this, and I understand that. On the other hand, when Senator Johnson makes a couple of comments, I do have to respond at some point. For example, the senator said that teachers, I think if I have the quote right, they have the skin, they have the meat and now they have the core, and now they can retire with a full ride and I guess my comment is, it's about time at some point. Teachers are a little bit different and, Senator Wesely, I'm going to respond to yours just a little bit when you say, why not judges and others? Teachers are in a very stressful situation and I wish all of you could be in a classroom at some point for a long period of time. You know the frustration in